

Security Information

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Under Secretary of State
The Deputy Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT : Brainwashing

1. I have called two meetings on this subject, the first on Saturday morning, 28 February, and the second on Tuesday morning, 3 March. The meetings were attended by [redacted] representatives of the PSB staff, Department of State, Department of Defense, the Army (Psywar office), the Air Force (PW office), and CIA.

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2. The main purpose of the two meetings was to explore available facts and to obtain [redacted] reactions to the possibility of forming a medical or scientific, or combined group, to examine the facts and issue a statement regarding the feasibility of brainwashing procedures.

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3. At the 3 March meeting the movie, "Documentary Evidence of the International Scientific Commission for the Investigation of U.S. Bacteriological Warfare", was shown with particular attention to the confessions of the four U.S.A.F. fliers, Lts. Enoch, Quinn, Niess and O'Neil. There was also some discussion of the recent confessions of the two Marine Corps fliers, Col. Schwable and Major Bley. These confessions had been read over the Peiping radio and we had the transcripts at the meetings. Since the meetings, it has been established that the confessions were in fact read and were not, as suggested, tape recordings of the voices of the two Marine officers.

4. At the end of the second meeting the following points were agreed upon:

a. [redacted] will immediately start to form a group of doctors, numbering 5 or 6 at the most, and consisting mainly of Americans but including other nationalities if desirable. Speed was recognized as necessary not only in forming the committee, but having it reach some useful conclusions. Names suggested by [redacted] were:

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b. As soon as this group is formed all available facts will be presented to it including the film, evidence from the Department of Defense, and names of persons who have been subjected to brainwashing treatment in China, such as Hayes, Hunter, and Bryant. Bryant, you may remember, is the Shanghai lawyer who recently wrote of his experiences in the "Saturday Evening Post". He is now in this country.

c. An interdepartmental working group was formed consisting of representatives of PSB [] (Chairman), Defense (William Godel), State (Mr. Ritter in Mr. Phillips' office), and CIA []. This group will collect all available facts and prepare itself to service [] group when formed. The first report of this working group is attached.

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d. State and Defense will consider an appropriate statement for release in the near future and make recommendations as to the appropriate person, agency, or department to make the release. This statement is attached to the Report of the working group.

5. I should like to raise the following additional points for discussion:

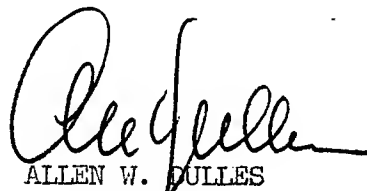
a. Some of the material which might be relevant to the work of [] committee may be classified, and some of it may be highly sensitive. We must determine who should decide whether or not such material should in fact be presented.

b. A quick search in CIA shows little scientific evidence to support brainwashing. There is rather massive evidence in the form of case reports and circumstantial evidence which leads to the conclusion that it is not a difficult matter, given the time, to force almost anyone to make an inaccurate statement, provided that the time at which the statement is to be made can be controlled and the individual is not required to continue his willingness to lie for a long period.

c. In the light of b., do we want the [] committee to consider the length of time for which brainwashing may be effective? It would seem that the evidence on this point is inconclusive and therefore, long consideration might be required before any answer could be attempted. I suggest that we eliminate this point unless it can be determined within a reasonably short period of time, and I recommend that we adopt [] suggestion to continue his committee in being for the consideration of this subject over an indefinite term.

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ALLEN W. DULLES
Director

Attachment

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ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE DIRECTOR OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
WASHINGTON

March 5, 1953

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Allen W. Dulles,
Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Report of the Psychological Strategy Board Committee
on "Planning for Psychological Exploitation of
Communist Methods of Indoctrination and Inducing
Confessions."

Attached is the report from the PSB Working Committee on
the indoctrination of U.S. prisoners of war requested by you
at the meeting in CIA on 3 March.



Acting Director

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Enclosure

As stated above

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PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Allen W. Dulles,
Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Report of the Psychological Strategy Board Committee
on "Planning for Psychological Exploitation of Communist
Methods of Indoctrination and Inducing Confessions."

References: a. Letter dated 19 February 1953 signed by
Secretary of Defense on this subject.

b. Proposed initial press release.

c. Background material appended to Secretary of
Defense letter referred in (a).

d. Revised press release attached.

Upon receipt of Mr. Wilson's letter a Psychological Strategy
Board Working Committee was formed and met on 3 March in CIA with
[redacted] and members of the Committee. The
minutes of that meeting have been directed to you by [redacted]
[redacted]

The Department of Defense urges an immediate press release
(see reference d. attached) on the subject of "The Utilization of
Captured American Personnel as Vehicles of Communist Propaganda."
The Department of Defense urges, in addition, that Mr. Lodge, at
the appropriate time in the United Nations, possibly in April, charge
the enemy with using United States' prisoners of war for propaganda
purposes and demand that U.S. prisoners of war who have confessed
dropping bacteriological warfare bombs in Korea be brought into
neutral territory for permanent internment until the end of hostilities.
For the first 90 days these prisoners of war should undergo medical

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and scientific examination by professional experts and that finally the findings of these experts be brought before the United Nations or, after a period of 90 days, the prisoners of war concerned be brought before the United Nations.

At the last meeting of the PSB Committee, it was agreed that in the meanwhile [] will head a carefully selected committee of medical, psychological and psychiatric experts in order to study all available data on the subject of confessions of U.S. prisoners of war, which will be drawn together for [] experts by the PSB Committee. [] report, along with PSB Committee suggested guidance, will be made available to Mr. Lodge, with the Board's approval, before April.

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The PSB Committee has the following warnings to offer:

1. It is not yet clear from available evidence how much compulsion the U.S. prisoners of war referred to above have undergone at the hands of their captors in order to lead them into such extravagances of confession.

2. We should be careful not to credit the enemy with a "miracle-weapon".

3. Because of the two points made above, the PSB staff feels that the word "menticide" should not be used in reference to this problem. It is, on the one hand, too strong a word or too frightening a term for the American public, and on the other hand, in many quarters the meaning has to be explained. The Committee is searching for a better catch-word to describe the program.

4. The chances should be carefully weighed that the prisoners of war might appear before the U.N. and speak their piece exactly as they do in the Chinese Communist propaganda films which we have seen.

Recommendations:

The PSB Committee recommends:

1. That an immediate press release, as approved by PSB, be issued by the Department of Army or higher authority in the Department of Defense if the Board so decides, charging the enemy with inducing false confessions from our prisoners of war, and again denying bacteriological warfare charges against the U.S. by the enemy.

2. That a group of scientists selected by [] be approved by the Board to be used as advisers in this problem.

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3. That Mr. Lodge bring up at the United Nations at the appropriate time charges as specified in the body of this paper, with PSB guidance.

4. That the background material (reference c.) provided by the Department of Defense be accepted as useful guidance in a continuing program on this subject.

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PROPOSED INITIAL
PRESS RELEASE

Some American and United Nations soldiers held captive by the Communists in North Korea are being put through an intensive program of indoctrination by political commissars in order to persuade them to accept and support Communist propaganda, _____ announced today.

_____ also stated that it is most important for the American people to know that these efforts are part and parcel of an intensive campaign on the part of the Communists to utilize captured American personnel as vehicles of Communist propaganda. The Communists are using some of these captured American and United Nations soldiers and their relatives and friends in the United States and elsewhere as tools of the Communist propaganda machine.

One aim, he said, is to mobilize the pressure of public opinion to bear on the United States Government and the United Nations to accept Communist terms for an armistice in Korea. To achieve this aim captured American soldiers are induced to include liberal doses of Communist propaganda in letters to their parents, relatives and friends.

"Since only letters approved by the Communists are permitted to leave the camps, these soldiers ^{are often} (cannot be blamed for being) trapped by their captors to the extent of including Communist propaganda in their letters," _____ stated. "Our soldiers

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want to keep in touch with their relatives at home, and their Communist captors are aware of the strong family ties which most of these soldiers have."

In addition to letters to relatives and friends, captured American personnel have appeared on propaganda broadcasts from Radio Peking beamed to the United States. Propaganda booklets, written by, or signed by American prisoners have been printed in Peking and have been mailed to addressees in the United States and elsewhere in large quantities.

Here the purpose of the Communists is to utilize their captives in support of their global propaganda drive to blacken the reputation and standing of the United States and to create disunity, dissension and confusion in the Free World. Some captured personnel have been induced ~~and coerced~~ to prepare false "confessions" in a callous attempt to implicate the United States and United Nations in atrocities and bacteriological warfare in Korea.

In the camps holding captured American personnel, individual and group discussions classes and printed material are utilized in a program of endless repetition of the favorite themes of Communist propaganda. The Communists are for "Peace"; the United States is the "Aggressor" in Korea; "the United States 'Imperialists' want to take over Asia."

Captured American personnel are also fed the standard Communist line that the United States has carried out biological warfare in Korea, and having access to no other information except what their captors want them to have, some of our men may have accepted these

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charges as true.

If a captured American does succumb to this persuasion after months of repetition of the charge, he is then asked to write to his parents, relatives and friends, further spreading the false propaganda of the Communists.

"The Communists do not accept the idea that a soldier who has been captured in battle has been removed from the conflict,"

_____ stated. "They have used their own troops who are held in our POW cages in South Korea for the purpose of fomenting riots and disorders in an attempt to strengthen their hand at the truce negotiations."

"They are also attempting to use captured American personnel who they hold in North Korea for what amounts to another form of warfare---propaganda warfare against the American people on the home front."